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October 15, 1951

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
University of Wisconsin
College of Agriculture
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Doctor Lederberg:

I should have written to you before this to thank you for the specimen of Escherichia coli preserved on silica gel, and for the detailed information you communicated regarding this method of preservation. I had intended to investigate the subject in literature and by consultation with colleagues a little more before attempting a reply. As you doubtless know anyway there is little or no mention in literature of this use of silica gel as a dehydrating and preserving agent, and I have found no familiarity with it among colleagues, although some have tried to desiccate cultures that were made on hydrated silica gel and, I would add, without success.

I find that the Will Corporation can only furnish granular silica gel that contains a cobalt indicator, and I suppose this would not be suitable for the preservation of bacterial cultures. I am writing to the Davison Company for a sample of the non-indicator form of silica gel.

Evidently this is a process that it will be well worth while to investigate further, and I am grateful to you for bringing it to my attention. We will test it on as many different kinds of organisms as our facilities permit.

Sincerely yours,

Freeman A. Weiss

Freeman A. Weiss
Curator

FAW/ap